

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed October 9, 2002 objected to the specification as containing informalities. Applicants have amended the specification to remove any errors. No new matter has been added.

The Office Action objected to claim 22 and suggested that it be made dependent on claim 20 rather than claim 21. Applicants have amended claim 22 to depend from claim 20.

The Office Action rejected claims 18 and 19 as being indefinite due to the recitation of "after the providing step" in claim 18. Applicants have amended claim 18 so that it now recites "after providing the exterior surface of the anastomotic component with a layer of biocompatible material." Withdrawal of the rejection of claims 18 and 19 is therefore respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the allowance of claims 27-40 as well as the indication that claims 2-6, 8-10, 12-14, 16 and 24-26 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form.

The Office Action rejected claims 1, 7, 11, 15, 17 and 20-23 under Section 103 as being obvious over Cope, et al. (5,690,656). Applicants submit that the present amendments overcome the rejection based on Cope, et al.

More specifically, independent claim 1 has been amended to include the subject matter of objected-to claim 2. As such, claim 1 and those claims depending from claim 1 are believed to be allowable and an indication to that effect is respectfully requested.

Applicants have amended independent claim 20 to include the subject matter of objected-to claim 24 (and intervening claim 21). As a result, claim 20 and those claims depending from claim 20 are believed to be allowable and withdrawal of the rejection is respectfully requested.

Applicants have also added new independent claims 41-48, which respectively correspond to objected-to dependent claims 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16 and 26 written in independent form.

In particular, new claim 41 corresponds to claim 8 written in independent form (including intervening claim 7). New claim 42 corresponds to claim 9 written in independent form. New claim 43 corresponds to claim 10 written in independent form. New claim 44 corresponds to claim 13 written in independent form. New claim 45 corresponds to claim 9 written in independent form. New claim 46 corresponds to claim 14 written in independent

form. New claim 47 corresponds to claim 16 written in independent form (including intervening claim 15). And finally, new claim 48 corresponds to claim 26 written in independent form claim. Favorable consideration and allowance of newly added claims 41-48 is thus respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In view of the present amendments and foregoing comments, Applicants submit that all pending claims are allowable, thus placing the subject application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and issuance of Notice of Allowance are respectfully submitted.

If a telephone interview would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at (650) 871-7676.

Applicants have also filed an IDS and respectfully request that the Examiner consider and initial the cited publications.

Please charge any required fees, including any necessary extension-of-time fees, or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 50-1983.

Respectfully submitted,

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